

<b>Report to</b>	<b>Performance Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> March 2023</b>
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	<b>Cllr Rhys Thomas – Lead Member for Housing &amp; Communities / Angela Loftus – Strategic Planning &amp; Housing Manager</b>
<b>Head of Service</b>	<b>Emlyn Jones - Head of Planning, Public Protection &amp; Countryside Services</b>
<b>Report author</b>	<b>Jane Abbott – Senior Officer Strategic Planning &amp; Housing</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Progress on delivering Denbighshire’s Housing &amp; Homelessness Strategy</b>

## **1. What is the report about?**

- 1.1. [Denbighshire's Housing & Homelessness Strategy](#) which was adopted by the Council on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020. A table setting out progress on the Action Plan is attached as Appendix A and [summary](#) of the strategy is included as Appendix B.

## **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

- 2.1. To provide information regarding the progress made to date in delivering the revised Housing & Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan approved by County Council on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

That the Committee:

- 3.1. considers the report, and provides observations on the progress made to date in delivering the revised Housing and Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan; and
- 3.2. agrees to continue to monitor delivery of the Housing & Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.

## **4. Report details**

4.1. Denbighshire's Housing & Homelessness Strategy sets out the Council's vision and aims for housing in the County for the period 2021-2026. It is an important corporate document for the Council and provides the framework for all Council housing and homelessness related functions (private & public). The Strategy is set within the framework of the Corporate Plan as detailed in 5.1 and sits alongside the Local Development Plan (LDP). The Strategy identifies 6 "Themes" which are priority areas for action to be targeted:

- More homes to meet local need and demand;
- Creating a supply of affordable homes;
- Ensuring safe and healthy homes;
- Preventing & ending homelessness in Denbighshire
- Homes and support for vulnerable people;
- Promoting and supporting communities.

4.2. Delivery of the Action Plan is overseen by the Strategic Housing & Homelessness Group (SHHG), which is chaired by Cllr Rhys Thomas in his role as Lead Member for Housing & Communities. Membership of the Group comprises those Lead Members with responsibility for an area of housing or homelessness within their portfolios, relevant Heads of Service and the Strategic Planning & Housing Manager.

4.3. The Group meets quarterly and monitors and reviews progress, with input from the various Heads of Service and officers involved with delivering individual actions. Any potential issues in meeting targets are identified at the earliest opportunity. The Group also oversees the strategic allocation of Social Housing Grant (SHG) which is awarded annually by Welsh Government (WG) to help bring forward affordable housing development by social landlords. In 2022/23 Denbighshire had £9.2m to allocate and in 2023/24 the indicative allocation is £10.2m this amount will be confirmed by April 2023.

4.4. The Strategy is accompanied by a 41-point Action Plan. It sets out in more detail the responsibilities of the various relevant teams within the Council and how we work with partners to help to realise the Council's vision for housing and homelessness. The Strategy is a living document and actions are added as work progresses and others are completed. The Housing & Homelessness Strategy has a five-year lifespan (2021 – 2026) and will need to be reviewed by 2026.

### **Key Areas of progress**

4.5 The Action Plan has been monitored through the review of specific themes at each meeting. All six themes have been reviewed in detail. Highlights of what has been achieved from these themes are:

- The highest annual affordable housing outturn achieved by Denbighshire of 285 affordable units making Denbighshire per head of population the highest performing authority for affordable housing in 2021/22 in Wales
- DCC have the first time accessed Social Housing Grant (SHG) of £1.4 million towards the development of the Older Persons scheme being built at the Former Prestatyn Library and have put forward another 3 schemes for funding to bid for a share of £10.2 million SHG funding for 2023/24
- The first new build Council dwellings in Denbigh and Prestatyn are expected to be completed by April/May 2023.
- Working group set up to progress the Extra Care development in Corwen, which will be working with Members to drive the project forward.
- Llys Awelon Extra Care, Ruthin extension has begun onsite with the old nursing home now demolished, completion expected February 2024
- Conversion of poor-quality Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) on Bath Street, Rhyl to self-contained accommodation is underway.
- Since the HMO Additional Licencing scheme was introduced in December 2020, 97 properties have been licenced – 18 of which are new dwellings to the licencing scheme.
- Rapid Re-housing Transition Plan approved by WG
- Homelessness Private Rented Sector leasing scheme has taken on 4 properties and targeting an additional 8 for 2023/24, aims to bring 80 homes (across Denbighshire & Conwy) on long term lease into the scheme by 2027.
- Housing First – Trailblazer pilot has been extended into Flintshire and will now operate until March 2024 with WG funding.
- Asset Management Strategy has been developed and adopted.
- My Home Denbighshire project supporting those at risk of homelessness set up

- Bespoke interventions with young people threatened with homelessness has resulted in Education Maintenance Awards being applied for and granted and successful supported living placements

4.6. Of the 41 actions identified 17 have been completed or embedded in operational delivery as 'business as usual', 17 actions are on track to be delivered within the set time scales, there is some slippage on 7 actions in accordance with the original deadlines set, but all now have amended deadlines and plans in place to complete them, the remainder are all on track for delivery within the deadlines agreed.

4.7. More actions will be added to the action plan as appropriate, one of the key drivers for this is service planning.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Themes?**

5.1. The six themes of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy detailed in **Appendix B** contribute to the following Corporate priorities – A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs, a healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire, a better connected Denbighshire, a greener Denbighshire, a fairer, safe, and more equal Denbighshire

5.2. The information has a positive contribution towards the Council's aim to become Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive by 2030 due to the action relating to the decarbonisation of Council social housing stock by 2030.

## **6 What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

6.1 The costs of the projects are closely monitored. All costs will be kept within budget – ours and those of our partners.

## **7 What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

7.1 A Well-being Impact Assessment was undertaken for the Housing and Homelessness Strategy but is not required for this report as it presents an update on progress

## **8 What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

8.1 Significant consultation and engagement meetings were undertaken to develop Denbighshire's Housing and Homelessness Strategy and were outlined in the report to Council seeking approval of the Strategy in December 2020. The Strategic Housing and Homelessness Group has a key role in monitoring and overseeing the delivery of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy and accompanying Action Plan.

## **9 Chief Finance Officer Statement**

9.1 Although the strategy does involve spend and significant investment in some instances, these are currently being delivered within existing approved budgets and resources. Further investment decisions will need to take account of the worsening financial outlook for local authorities.

## **10 What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

10.1 Ensuring that people are supported to live in homes that meet their needs is a key priority for the Council. A range of mechanisms are in place to monitor progress, including regular reports to the Strategic Housing and Homelessness Group and reports as and when required by Scrutiny

## **11 Power to make the decision**

11.1 Local Government Act 2000, Housing Act 1985 (S8), Housing Act 2004 (S8), Local Government Act 2003 (S87), Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

11.2 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and Section 7 of the Council's Constitution set out Scrutiny's powers with relation to this matter.